

Message Text

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ACTION PM-04

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CIAE-00 DODE-00 H-01 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05
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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: MARR PFOR MP US
SUBJECT: OPPOSITION ATTACKS GOVERNMENT'S FOREIGN POLICY,
WITH PARTICULAR REFERENCE TO DIEGO GARCIA

1. SHADOW FOREIGN MINISTRE JEAN CLAUDE DE L'ESTRAC PRESENTED THE OPPOSITION MAURITIAN MILITANT MOVEMENT'S CRITIQUE OF THE GOVERNMENT'S FOREIGN POLICY IN A SPEECH IN THE LEIGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY ON 22 MARCH. HE CALLED ON THE GOVERNMENT TO UNDER-TAKE AN "OFFENSIVE" FOR THE DEMILITARIZATION OF THE INDIAN OCEAN AND THE RETURN OF DIEGO GARCIA TO MAURITIUS. THE FOLLOWING ACCOUNT OF THIS PORTION OF DE L'ESTRAC'S SPEECH IS TRANSLATED FROM A REPORT PUBLISHED IN THE LE MAURICIEN OF 23 MARCH.

2. BEGIN TEXT: THE SPEAKER MADE CERTAIN SUGGESTIONS AND INSISTED THAT THE GOVERNMENT SHOULD LAUNCH, IN THE ORGANIZATION OF AFRICAN UNITY AND AMONG THE NON-ALIGNED AND AFRO-ARAB COUNTRIES, A CAMPAIGN TO EFFECT THE DEMILITARIZATION OF THE

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INDIAN OCEAN AND THE RETURN OF DIEGO GARCIA TO MAURITIUS. MR. DE L'ESTRAC REFERRED TO THE SPEECH FROM THE THRONE WHICH PROCLAIMED THE DESIRE OF MAURITIUS " TO CONTINUE TO WORK IN CLOSE COLLABORATION WITH THE UN, THE ORGANIZATION OF AFRICAN UNITY AND THE COMMONWEALTH FOR THE MAINTENANCE OF PEACE, FREEDOM AND SECURITY AMONG THE MEMBERS OF THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY". HE CONSIDERED THE TERMS USED IN THE

SPEECH FROM THE THRONE TO BE "PRETENTIOUS" BECAUSE "MAURITIUS LIVES IN PERPETUAL VIOLATION OF THE CONVENTIONS AND RESOLUTIONS VOTED BY THESE ORGANIZATIONS."

3. FOR MR. DE L'ESTRAC, MAURITIUS CARRIES A HEAVY RESPONSIBILITY AS REGARDS THE MILITARY ESCALATION IN THE INDIAN OCEAN. "WE WILL JUDGE THIS GOVERNMENT NOT BY ITS WORDS BUT BY ITS ACTS." MILITARIZATION OF THE INDIAN OCEAN, THE SPEAKER SAID, IS THE RESULT OF THE LACK OF FORESIGHT AND INCOMPETENCE OF THE GOVERNMENT. THE WARSHIPS WHICH NOW CRUISE PERMANENTLY IN THIS REGION REPRESENT A DANGER TO THE SECURITY OF THE COUNTRIES BORDERING THE INDIAN OCEAN AND CONSTITUTE A THREAT TO WORLD PEACE.

4. ON THE SUBJECT OF DIEGO GARCIA, WHICH HAS BEEN CONVERTED INTO AN ANGLO-AMERICAN MILITARY BASE, MR. DE L'ESTRAC STATED THAT THE CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE TRANSFER OF THE ISLAND TO THE BRITISH ARE NOT CLEAR. IN EFFECT HE CITED CERTAIN CONTRADICTORY DECLARATIONS MADE BY OUR LEADERS. THE FIRST WAS THAT MAURITIUS, AT THAT TIME A BRITISH COLONY, COULD NOT REFUSE TO TRANSFER DIEGO GARCIA TO THE BRITISH. THE MINISTER OF EDUCATION, FOR HIS PART, PUBLICLY SPOKE OF THE "BREAKING OF A CONTRACT ON THE PART OF THE BRITISH." ALLUSION WAS MADE TO THE MINUTES OF CONVERSATIONS BETWEEN THE MAURITIAN AND BRITISH GOVERNMENTS, WHICH LEFT THE CLEAR UNDERSTANDING THAT DIEGO GARCIA WOULD BE USED AS A COMMUNICATIONS BASE. LATER ON IT WAS SAID THAT THE QUESTION HAD BEEN RAISED IN AN INTERNATIONAL FORUM. THAT DID NOT HAPPEN. TO THE CONTRARY, THE PRIME MINISTER, SIR SEEWOOSAGUR RAMGOOLAM, MADE A DECLIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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LARATION TO DENY ALL THE PREVIOUS STATEMENTS MADE ABOUT DIEGO GARCIA.

5. DIEGO GARCIA, MR. DE L'EXTRAC SAID, IS THE PRINCIPAL STRONG POINT OF THE AMERICAN STRATEGY. THE INSTALLATIONS ON THE ISLAND WILL PERMIT IT TO RECEIVE B-52 BOMBERS, AND SUPPLIES AND WORKS ARE NOW UNDERWAY TO RECEIVE NUCLEAR SUBMARINES. REFERRING TO A STATEMENT MADE BY THE FORMER LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION, WHO SAID THAT DIEGO GARCIA IS OF NO INTEREST TO THE MAN IN THE STREET, MR. DE L'ESTRAC SAID HE WAS OF A CONTRARY OPINION. HE ARGUED THAT THE MILITARIZATION OF DIEGO GARCIA CONSITUATES A DANGER "FOR ALL MAURITIANS." AT THESAME TIME HE REPROACHED THE MAURITIAN GOVERNMENT FOR "HAVING

ABANDONED ALL IDEA AND ALL EFFORT TO OBTAIN THE RETURN OF DIEGO GARCIA TO MAURITIUS." THE SYECHELLES, BY CONTRAST, AT THE MOMENT OF ACCEDING TO INDEPENDENCE, WERE ABLE TO OBTAIN THE RETURN OF THE THREE ISLANDS THEY HAD CEDED TO THE ENGLISH AT THE SAME TIME DIEGO GARCIA WAS TURNED OVER TO THEM.

6. THEREAFTER THE SPEAKER CITED THE WISH EXPRESSED BY THE AMERICAN PRESIDENT, MR. JIMMY CARTER, FOR THE DEMILITARIZATION OF THE INDIAN OCEAN. HE STATED THAT THE GOVERNMENT SHOULD SEIZE THE OCCASION TO RE-LAUNCH THE DEBATE ON THE DEMILITARIZATION OF THIS AREA. THE GOVERNMENT WAS MOREOVER ACCUSED OF HAVING FAILED IN ITS RESPONSIBILITIES BY NOT PROFITING FROM THE OPPORTUNITY GIVEN BY ITS PRESIDENCY OF THE ORGANIZATION OF AFRICAN UNITY THIS YEAR TO SENSITIZE AFRICAN OPINION ON THE QUESTION OF DEMILITARIZATION OF THE INDIAN OCEAN. END TEXT
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